

CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE IN THE BAHAMAS
VIEWED THROUGH THE LENS OF CRITICAL REGIONALISM

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ABSTRACT

Critical Regionalism is a term that came about during the early 1980's. It deals with designing architecture based on specific and unique characteristics of a region including geographical, economical, and cultural conditions. It does not simply stick to traditional means of design, or copy what exists in the region, but learns from it and reapplies it in a contemporary or up to date manner. This paper looks at these conditions in The Bahamas, and explores a critical regionalist approach for architecture in The Bahamas moving forward.

Literary research was done on authorities of critical regionalism. In 1981 Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre introduced the term. Although there may be variations between different authors' ideas, key concepts remain the same – avoiding homogeneous designs worldwide, and creating architecture best suited for its location. Further research included traveling to islands within the country, conducting interviews with architects and artists, and examination of hypothesis forming surveys. Based on this, the initial assertion for this paper – that there is a lack of contemporary architecture in The Bahamas – was further substantiated.

Due to the large tourism industry, developments within the country put primary focus on appealing to tourists with secondary emphasis placed on the community. This should be reversed. Additionally, design of a building should not simply be about aesthetics but take into consideration the comfort of its users. This can best be achieved by understanding and responding to the region and its culture, while applying contemporary methods such as modern building techniques and materials.

CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE IN THE BAHAMAS

VIEWED THROUGH THE LENS OF CRITICAL REGIONALISM

Do you live in huts? Do you ride to school on dolphins? Do you wear grass skirts?

These are some questions that I or other Bahamians have been asked by a foreigner of The Bahamas. While some of these questions seem outlandish and humorous to Bahamians, others may believe these things to be true. When people think of the Caribbean they usually think of exotic places but can have certain (limited) perceptions based on what is displayed in the media. The Bahamas, officially “The Commonwealth of The Bahamas”, is an archipelago of about 700 islands and cays located south east of Florida (U.S.A.), known for its sun, sand, and sea. It is comprised of many tropical beauties, and is a well-known tourist destination. However to me, it is simply home.

Tourism is the top industry in The Bahamas and has a strong influence on developments within the country. However it should be remembered that for tourists, the country is a temporary setting, while for locals it is permanent. The architecture should therefore not only be designed to entice foreigners, but foremost to meet the needs and comfort of the Bahamian people. The best way to do this is to design based on the region – taking into account geographical, environmental, cultural and social conditions, and understanding the historical architecture. Contemporary elements should be incorporated in an effort to not become outdated architecturally, as well as to enhance the country. Modern architecture came about at the turn of the 20th century which emphasized simple forms, lack of ornamentation, and the use of new materials such as glass and steel. *For this paper, when referring to the time period of Modernism, variations of the word will be denoted with a capital ‘M’, while modern meaning up to date will be denoted with a small ‘m’.* Contemporary architecture refers to architecture of the present time, but we can see a relation to Modernism in the way large spans of glass, less ornamentation, and new innovative design methods break free from traditional architecture. In The Bahamas, it is not uncommon to see architecture that although based on Georgian Colonial style, includes Modern characteristics. Any modernization should be done critically though, making sure that the country does not lose its identity. As society, especially technology progresses it becomes easier to standardize things worldwide, furthering globalization. Increased communication and transportation allow easier importation, exportation, and social and cultural influence from one country to another. This process yields to a much more homogeneous architectural language which could be detrimental to

a region and its sense of place. Critical Regionalism however, is focused on designing based on the particularities of a place. It seeks to regain the lost identity that can come about through Modern architecture. This is done by allowing geographical context and distinctive qualities of a region to have direct influence on design. Therefore I will use critical regionalism as a lens through which to explore and determine how best to design contemporary architecture in The Bahamas, while still being true to the country's culture and enhancing its community.

RESEARCH

The term "critical regionalism" was first introduced by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre in 1981. Since then it has been widely discussed and famously so by Kenneth Frampton. Initial research for this paper included investigation of literary works by these authors. *Tropical Architecture, Critical Regionalism in the Age of Globalization*¹ was especially useful due to the case studies of architecture in tropical zones. *Architectural Regionalism: Collected Writings on Place, Identity, Modernity, and Tradition*² includes excerpts of writings by various authors and provided contradicting viewpoints, which allowed me to gain a better understanding of these topics and take a position for this paper. Critical Regionalism is related to numerous terms which I also delved into. Key terms within this paper are modernism, globalization, and contemporary architecture. Understanding the history and current conditions of The Bahamas is also essential. Main sources for this part of the research were Gail D Saunders' "The Historical Development of 'the City of Nassau'"³, Andrew Gravette's *Architectural Heritage of the Caribbean: An A-Z of Historic Buildings*,⁴ and Stephen Mouzon's *A Living Tradition [Architecture of The Bahamas]*⁵. The latter book seeks to inform Bahamian architects as well as non-experts, of the traditional and refined architectural elements of The Bahamas while explaining the purpose of each.

The main islands of The Bahamas are New Providence (Nassau), Grand Bahama, The Abacos, The Berry Islands, Bimini, Andros, Eleuthera, The Exumas, Cat Island, Rum Cay, San Salvador, Long Island, Acklins, Crooked Island, Mayaguana, Inagua and Ragged Island. *It should be noted that the country's capital, Nassau is located on the Island of New Providence, but the names are often interchanged, with Nassau being most commonly used.* Although a native of The Bahamas I have not visited all seventeen main islands. To enhance my knowledge of architecture throughout the country, I travelled to and toured some of the islands, and interviewed persons that have visited various islands as well. My initial

assumption was corroborated – that although there is a sense of Bahamian culture on all islands, each provide a unique experience. When I arrived in Freeport, Grand Bahama, I immediately noticed a difference in the architecture and the layout of the roads compared to New Providence. There is more of an American influence within that city and it was quite apparent.

In order to get an idea of how people view architecture within The Bahamas I conducted a survey, mainly answered by Bahamian citizens and residents, and several tourists. The survey asked questions that allowed me to form hypotheses of how receptive people would be to increasing modern architecture within the country, as well as gain an idea of what building type(s) would be appreciated. I interviewed local architects and artists to gain further understanding of their views on the state of architecture and art within the country. Bahamian culture includes various forms of art, so interviewing artists aided in hypothesizing how parts of the culture could be affected by architecture.

Case studies of architecture within The Bahamas, similar regions, and contrasting regions allowed me to compare design methods and styles. I not only looked at architecture that responded to the region but also to the community. Based on positive and negative cases I was able to determine solutions appropriate to The Bahamas. The following are two case studies that were particularly useful.

Case Study 1: Straw Market (Nassau, Bahamas; Opened in 2011)

The straw market is a place that tourists can buy local handcrafts such as straw hats, straw bags, and jewelry made with local materials. The newly constructed building is located Downtown where there is a stricter building code in order to maintain a vernacular of traditional colonial architecture. The building seems to compromise between contemporary and traditional (*Fig. 1*). It is unique to surrounding architecture with the look of stone on the façade of the main north and south entrances, flatter roofs over the east and west wings, and metal roofing. However, it still relates to the vernacular with porticos at the main entrances, columns along the facades, and hipped and gable roofs over the central block. I respect and understand the desire to keep traditional vernacular in certain areas, but this building provides the opportunity to increase contemporary architecture near the Downtown area. This would add variety to the architecture and add to tourist attractions.



Fig 1.

Courtesy: author

Case Study 2: Cotton Tree Pilot Housing (Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia; 1992-1994)

The project is described in *“Ten Shades of Green: Architecture And The Natural World”* as:

“A low-rise multifamily housing development in a subtropical climate that serves a mixed community of families and single people, homeowners and renters, in a complex that preserves trees on the site and draws on the local vernacular for its forms, materials, and low energy solutions.”⁶

In an effort to encourage interaction among residents and neighbors, there are both private and communal spaces. The spaces and dwellings are strategically designed to channel breeze throughout the site. “To suit the context, close to the beach, as well as the climate... the design draws on the local beach house vernacular of shaded porches and windows and light-weight construction with a low thermal inertia.”⁷ Corrugated steel cladding on the walls adds a contemporary look while creating a “cooling ventilated cavity”⁸. Roofs are projected to provide shade, and wooden slats are used in certain areas to provide privacy while allowing the passage of breeze. What I appreciate about this design is the consideration of vernacular context, environmental concerns, as well as the community. The climate and local conditions were just as important as social enhancement, and therefore the final design can be valued for numerous reasons.

Interviews & Survey

When asked to describe the architectural style of The Bahamas, almost half of the respondents (33 of 77) used the word “colonial” in their description. An additional three respondents used the word “traditional”. While many tried to describe a specific style, local architect Marcus Laing described the

architectural style as “generic/ non-descript”, “does not fit in any established style”, and stated that he would like to see more modern architecture in The Bahamas.⁹ The following chart (Fig. 2) shows that the majority of survey respondents desire modern architecture in the country.

For this survey, the word modern was used instead of contemporary to mean ‘up to date’ because although commonly interchanged, the word modern is more often used.

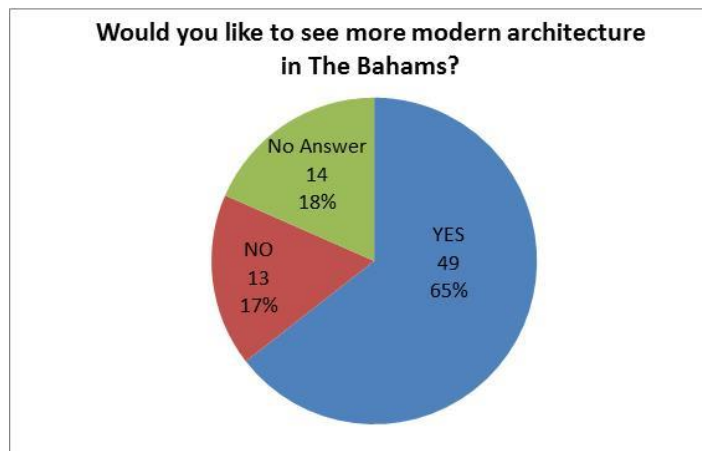


Fig. 2 – Survey Question #13

THE BAHAMAS



Fig. 3 – Map of The Bahamas Source: <http://www.bahamas.com/>

Before discussing the architecture of The Bahamas, it is imperative to understand the country geographically and culturally. As mentioned, The Bahamas is made up of a variety of islands and cays (Fig. 3). It is situated in the Atlantic Ocean, and the Tropic of Cancer runs through Exuma. The islands

“are the result of coral reefs which become dry land when the sea level dropped hundreds of centuries ago. [They] are mostly flat with miles of white and pink sandy beaches”.¹⁰ Temperatures range from the 60’s to 90’s (degrees Fahrenheit), trade winds contribute to the warm climate, there’s average to high humidity, and intermittent rain year round. Hurricane season lasts from June to November, but the risks vary from island to island with northern islands usually receiving more damage. New Providence receives less damage from hurricanes due to its sheltered location by other islands, and lower surrounding waters. Although one of the smaller islands at 7 miles by 21 miles, New Providence is home to approximately 70% of the country’s population of just over 316,000 inhabitants.¹¹ This is quite noticeable when comparing life on the main island to that of the outer islands. International flights are mainly available to New Providence and Grand Bahama. Although not all islands are readily accessible by commercial airlines, one can travel from island to island by boat, chartered planes, or domestic flights. The family islands – referring to islands other than New Providence– although developed in some regions can have substantial unpopulated areas. While this allows for further development and advancement, the seclusion is an aspect that should not be completely taken away as it is sought after by many who feel the need to ‘get away’ and enjoy the tranquility of the island(s). Each island has its own feel and some are known for distinct attractions. For example, Abaco is known as the “Boating Capital of the World”, the Berry Islands are referred to as the “Billfish Capital of The Bahamas”, while Cat Island is known for its historic ruins, and is home to Mt. Alvernia, the highest point in The Bahamas at about 206 feet above sea level.¹² When building new architecture in certain locations one must be aware of the existing structures and how they will affect each other. There are privately owned cays, some owned by wealthy persons and some by companies. Most Bahamians are of African descent due to the influx of slaves in the 18th and 19th century, while a smaller percent are descendants of English settlers. Music of The Bahamas includes rake and scrape and junkanoo. Junkanoo is a parade that is held certain times during the year where participants dress in lively costumes, dance and play music for spectators to enjoy. Items made of straw and other local materials are made by local vendors, with straw hats and bags being popular items (see Research, Case Study 1).

ARCHITECTURE OF THE BAHAMAS and CRITICAL REGIONALISM

Once under British rule, The Bahamas became fully independent on July 10th, 1973. There have been various influences on The Bahamas’ development. The first inhabitants were Lucayan Indians

between 900 and 1500 A.D., but they were eventually wiped out by European voyagers after Christopher Columbus landed on San Salvador and discovered the New World (although there is debate on which island he landed on). Significant architectural changes occurred from the 17th century when early development of Nassau began in the mid 1600's by English and Bermudan settlers. Due to its geographical advantages Nassau became the country's capital. This is also why it became the base for pirates who destroyed and pillaged Spanish and French ships. When Woodes Rogers, the first Royal Governor, came into office (1718 – 1721) he was determined to rebuild Nassau after Spanish and French fleets attacked and destroyed it in 1703. During his second term in office (1729 – 1732), the first General Assembly was held in which an act was passed to “lay out the town of Nassau”.¹³ Over the next thirty years there was further development under succeeding governors. A large part of the country's historical architecture is its forts and lighthouses which were also constructed during that time and some still exist today – for example, Fort Fincastle, and Fort Charlotte.

During the 1780's loyalists (Americans that remained loyal to the British monarchy during the American Revolution war) settled in The Bahamas after fleeing from the United States of America. “Many were rich cotton planters, but there were also the middle-class, workers, servants and slaves, who built their homes in the style of those in New England, the Carolinas, Mississippi, Louisiana or Florida.”¹⁴ When slavery was abolished many settled in The Bahamas. Although not limited to, houses were prominently Georgian style but altered to suit local conditions (e.g. climate, economic state, available materials). They were built of wood and stone from local quarries. “High peaked roofs, dormer windows, brackets and lattice work, were also characteristic of this period.”¹⁵

“The most characteristic of Bahamian Georgian are in Nassau and include Balcony House (c. 1970), Market Street, a clapboard house built in imported American cedar and one of the few surviving examples showing the influence of shipwright's art in its curved timber balcony brackets. Larger houses, however, were usually built in stuccoed rubble with accentuated ashlar quoins and Georgian sliding sash or Demerara windows (with top-hung opening shutters to provide shade with ventilation during the day) and steeply pitched roofs with dormers.”¹⁶

A prime example of existing colonial style architecture is the Government House (Fig. 4), which dates back to the early 1800's.



Fig. 4 – Government House (Nassau, Bahamas)

Source: <http://ourbahamas.org/> (accessed August 31, 2012)¹⁷

After World War II there was an increased building of hotels and suburbs due to growth of the banking and tourism industries. By the 1960's office blocks were developed and contrasting architectural styles could be seen. Over time the country's architecture has gradually changed but there is still visible relation to past, traditional architecture. For example, exterior window shutters are a traditional architectural element that can be seen on many existing residential and some public and commercial buildings. They are useful in providing shade while still allowing sunlight and wind to enter, and also protect against hurricanes. However, the use of shutters works best with smaller windows so larger expansions of glass, which is seen more in contemporary architecture, would thus require different methods of protection. Although limestone and wood were traditionally used in construction, concrete is now most common. One of the reasons is that it is more effective in resisting hurricane damage. Within The Bahamas an island's location also affects the architecture, because some islands have a higher risk of hurricane damage. For example, more metal roofs can be seen on commercial as well as residential buildings in Freeport (in comparison to New Providence) due to the fact that this island usually receives more damage during hurricanes. "[T]he character of the islands has been maintained, although some International Style commercial buildings have been erected, for example the National Insurance Board Headquarters Building (1986)..."¹⁸ (Fig. 5)



Fig.5 – National Insurance Board (Nassau, Bahamas)

Source: <http://www.nib-bahamas.com/>¹⁹

Currently, elements of Modern architecture mixed with Georgian colonial architecture exist. There are modern residences, while public and commercial buildings tend to reflect traditional architecture of the country. This is especially evident in the Downtown area, which is a popular tourist destination, and is the arrival area of cruise passengers.

Tourism significantly affects the design of architecture within The Bahamas. By the mid 1800's tourism began to flourish, and is now the largest industry of the country. If The Bahamas, particularly some of the family islands, becomes too modernized it will lose the feel and culture that a lot of tourists go to enjoy. Many projects keep this in mind, and have more of an urgency to keep the culture intact, especially tourist destinations. In an effort to please tourists and create a certain feel that is expected – paradise, tropical, island feel – certain architecture are purposefully designed with a lack of modern style. This is not to say that modern style is neglected in The Bahamas, but it's not as abundant as other regions. Currently there are various construction projects in The Bahamas, mainly the redesign of the Cable Beach strip by a company known as Baha Mar. This, along with a recently completed sports stadium, and road constructions are the most talked about projects as of late within the country. There is an obvious international influence on these projects – from the design, to the builders, to the developers. In reference to El Pedregal, which was designed by Luis Barragán but financed by and advertised to an international market, Keith Eggner asks “...how much of the project's ‘sense of place’ was generated by local concerns and conditions, and how much of it was intended to appeal to foreign (mis)conceptions of Mexico”²⁰. If architecture in The Bahamas places local and community needs as top priority, while still considering how it affects tourism, there would be much more positive outcomes.

Before design of a building the architect must understand the region. The following factors need to be taken into consideration: climate, landscape and topography, materials and resources, economic and social conditions, culture, and vernacular. Once analysis begins, each of these categories can be further broken down. The following are main issues that should be considered when designing in The

Bahamas – 1) Climate: sunlight, wind and ventilation, extreme weather conditions such as hurricanes; 2) Landscape and Topography: site location, understand the land type and topography, and whether or not topography changes due to climatic issues, consideration of vegetation and natural elements; 3) Materials and Resources: understand how materials can be affected by climate and organisms such as termites and fungi, weigh the benefits and disadvantages of importing versus using local resources, understand modern materials and methods of construction; 4) Economic: look at how the economy could be improved in the long run (public and commercial buildings); 5) Social: take into consideration how the final product may be received locally and internationally, and how the community may be affected; 6) Culture: determine if there is a reflection of Bahamian culture, and whether or not the culture would be enhanced – the amount of culture that needs to be integrated varies with building use and type; 7) Vernacular: understand what was done before and why; take successful aspects of past architecture and determine the best way to reapply it to contemporary architecture; determine if it is necessary to deviate from traditional methods, and if so how much. For Lefaivre and Tzonis,

“[t]he critical approach of contemporary regionalist architecture reacts against this explosion of regionalist counterfeit settings by employing defamiliarization. Critical regionalism is interested in specific elements from the region... and incorporates them ‘strangely’, rather than familiarly...”²¹

Although this may seem drastic to some, the abovementioned approach seeks to intellectually stimulate while appropriating architecture to its region. Defamiliarization allows one to redefine what is considered to be the norm, and can open the doors to finding successful solutions to architecture moving forward. Once the necessary issues (the categories explained previously) are analyzed, a contemporary building can be designed that appropriately responds to and meets the needs of the site while re-vitalizing the community.

Contemporary architecture uses ideals of Modernism but in an up to date fashion. With the advancement of technology, means of communication and transportation, globalization increases. As similar styles are implemented globally, the ability to pictorially isolate a building and decipher its location becomes more difficult. In the article “Globalization Challenges in Architecture”, Ibrahim Eldemery discusses how new technology and homogeny of the built environments “depriv[e] human habitats of cultural and regional identity”.²² Eldemery goes on to explain opposing stances on globalization – anti-global and pro-global forces. He mentions the main argument between the two, that “for some, globalization entails the Westernization of the world. Some see globalization as generating

increasing homogeneity, while others see it producing diversity and heterogeneity through increased hybridization"²³. Globalization can have the effect of enhancing aesthetic appeal of architecture around the world, but when it is done without concern or consideration to the geographical context, this in turn can produce negative results as places start to lose their identity. A balance should exist between the two – where modernization can occur but not to the extent where it loses the distinctness of that specific region. Modernization cannot be ignored, it is necessary in order for the world and different regions to progress. Ignoring modern advancements would result in the region becoming outdated and surpassed by others, and in today's competitive society such an occurrence would hinder that region from higher levels of prosperity. However, it must be kept in mind that in some regions the slightest form of modernism is quite obvious, so designing critically and at an appropriate pace is imperative.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned, the identity of a place is based on various factors including geographic qualities, climate, and culture. Each region differs in these categories and would require different design methods and results. If a building is designed to only meet general requirements and theoretically can be moved from one region to another without much affect, then it is not critical regionalist architecture. Due to the size of the Bahama islands it is easier to have a community feel, especially within the various settlements. Architecture within The Bahamas should take advantage of this and create spaces that encourage people to positively interact and further strengthen the community. There is currently a limited variety of places where locals can go to leisurely spend their time. When designing for The Bahamas architects should take advantage of its features to create compelling architecture. If contemporary architecture is gradually increased on the islands, there could eventually be a cohesive contemporary language throughout the country with variations based on unique characteristics of each island. There should also be more projects that aim to rejuvenate the community. Enhancing the culture and community of The Bahamas will produce a better environment that tourists can enjoy.

The risk of homogeneous buildings and designs worldwide should not inhibit modernization, but stimulate people to look for a balance and find the best way to merge their culture with modern techniques. Designing a contemporary building through the lens of critical regionalism will produce architecture that speaks to its time, and is distinct to its location. It would not only result in architecture that is sustainable but also one that provides optimum experience for its user(s).

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FINAL DESIGN WORK

As a solution to issues mentioned in my thesis paper I have proposed a cultural center located between two major local and tourist gathering locations. This center would appeal to locals and tourists alike, and be easily accessible by all. The program of the building consists of art and museum galleries, class rooms, as well as large community spaces. The placement and connection of spaces are designed so that users can learn about the country's culture while interacting with others and enjoying the island's beautiful scenery. There are many aspects of Bahamian culture. However, I feel that the knowledge and exposure of local art and artists should be enhanced. Therefore there is an abundance of art spaces provided, both public and private. The history, which is vital to any country's culture, is also showcased in the museum and art history gallery. Below is a breakdown of the building program.

BAHAMAS CULTURAL & ARTS CENTER

PROGRAM

TOTAL FLOOR AREA = 267,204 sq.ft.

Ground Level = 24,816 sq.ft.

- Offices/ Administration, Main Lobby

Level 1 = 100,935 sq.ft.

- Administration, Art Exhibition Space, Public Museum, Private Museum, Stage

Level 2 = 71,343 sq.ft.

- Restaurant , Art Gallery (History), Main Art Gallery

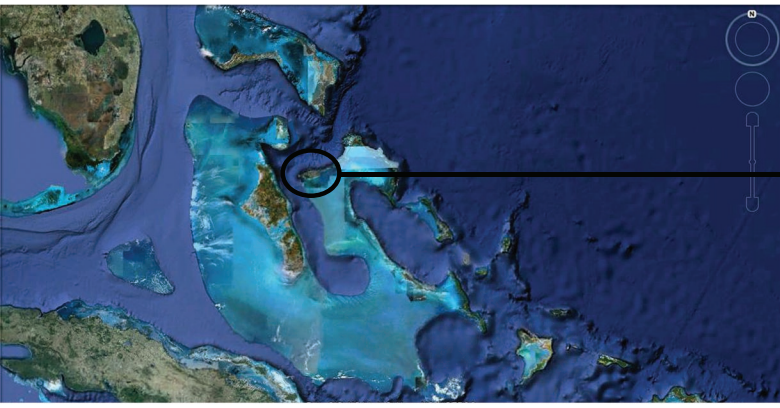
Level = 21,491 sq.ft.

- Balcony/ Art

Level 4 = 48,619 sq.ft.

- Communal Space and Classes, Artist Studios and Lounge

SITE



1. Islands of The Bahamas



2. New Providence, Bahamas



4. Clifford Park (Site)



3. Nassau, Bahamas



5. LOOKING WEST



6. LOOKING EAST



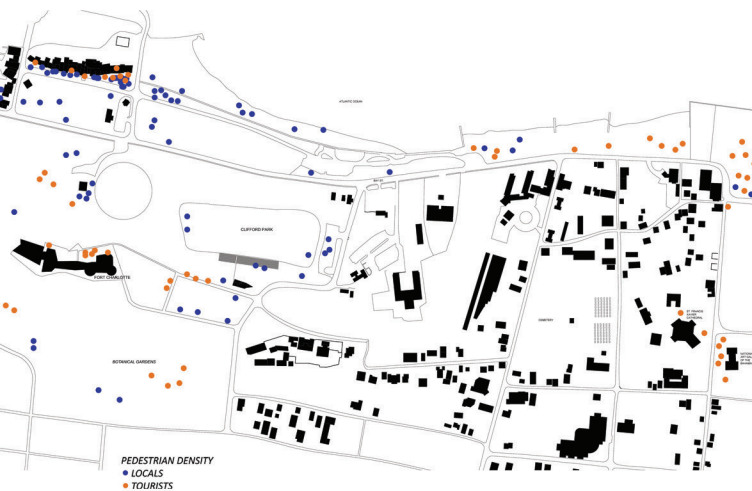
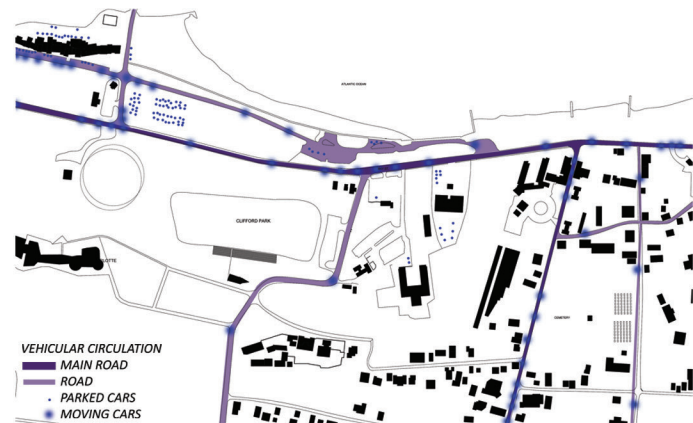
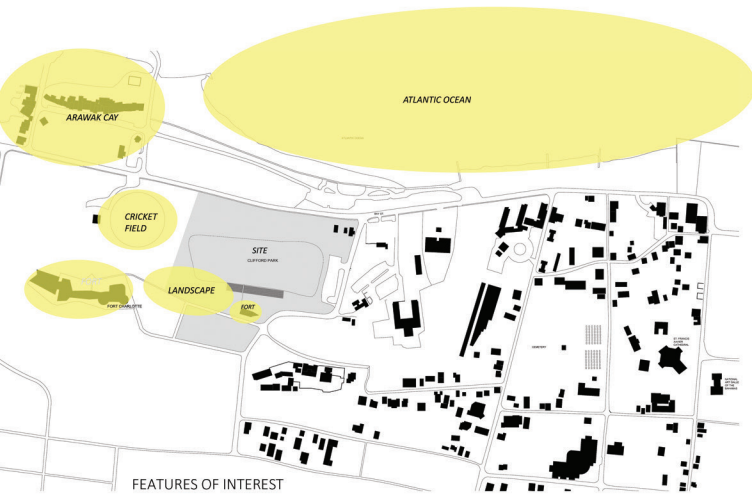
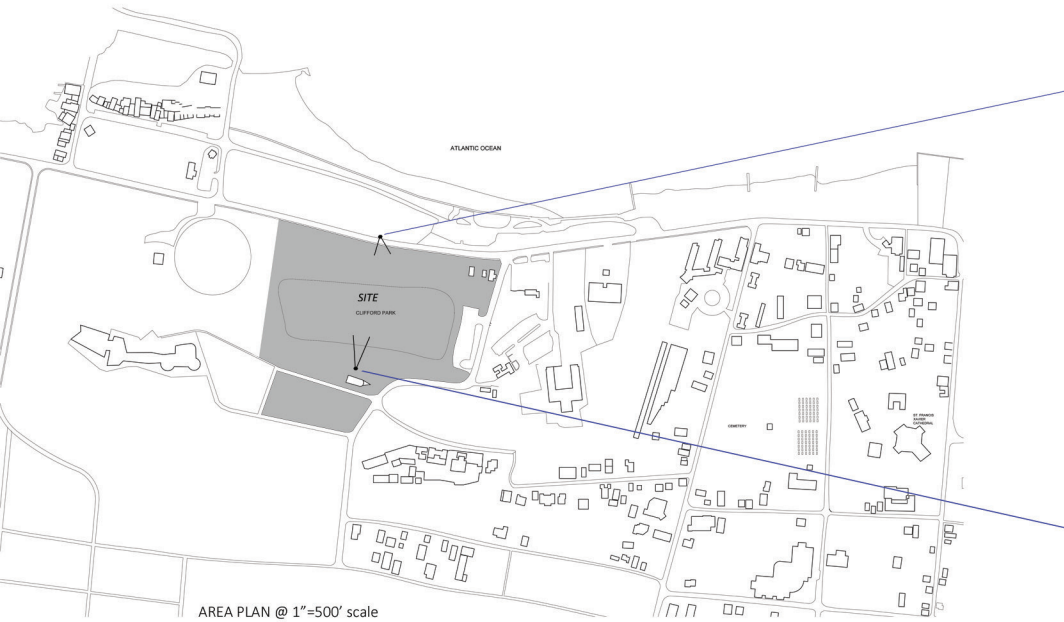
7. LOOKING SOUTH
FROM ATLANTIC OCEAN

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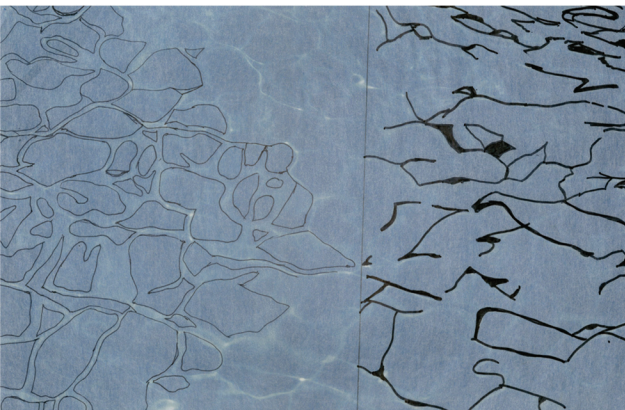
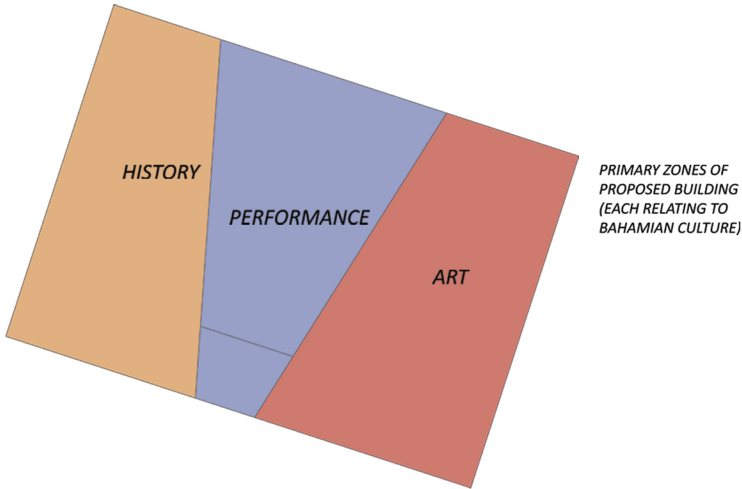
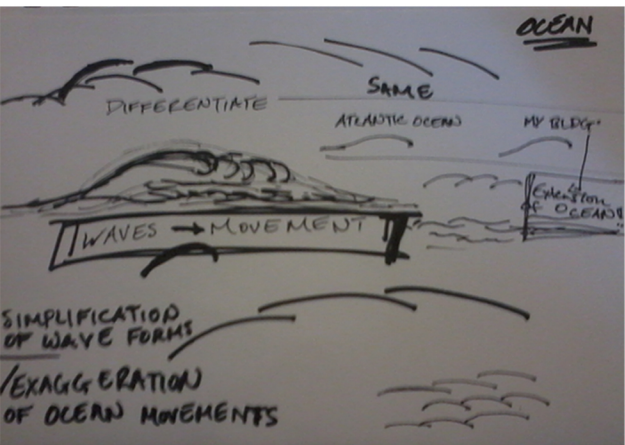
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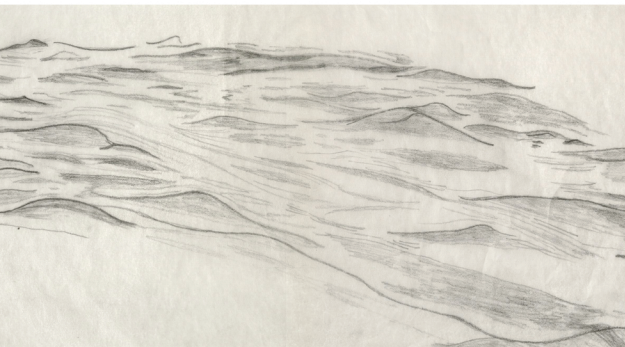
SITE ANALYSIS



SITE ANALYSIS, PROCESS DIAGRAMS



OCEAN PATTERNS SKETCHES & STUDY



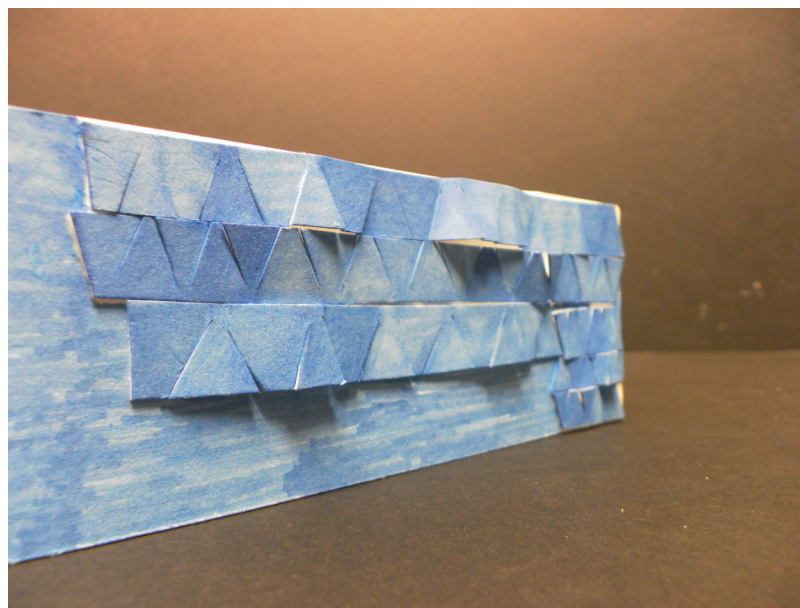
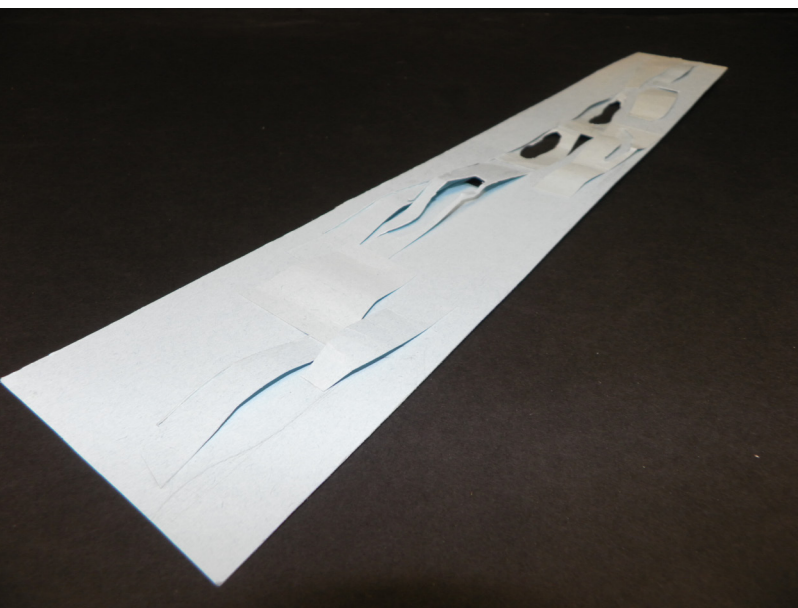
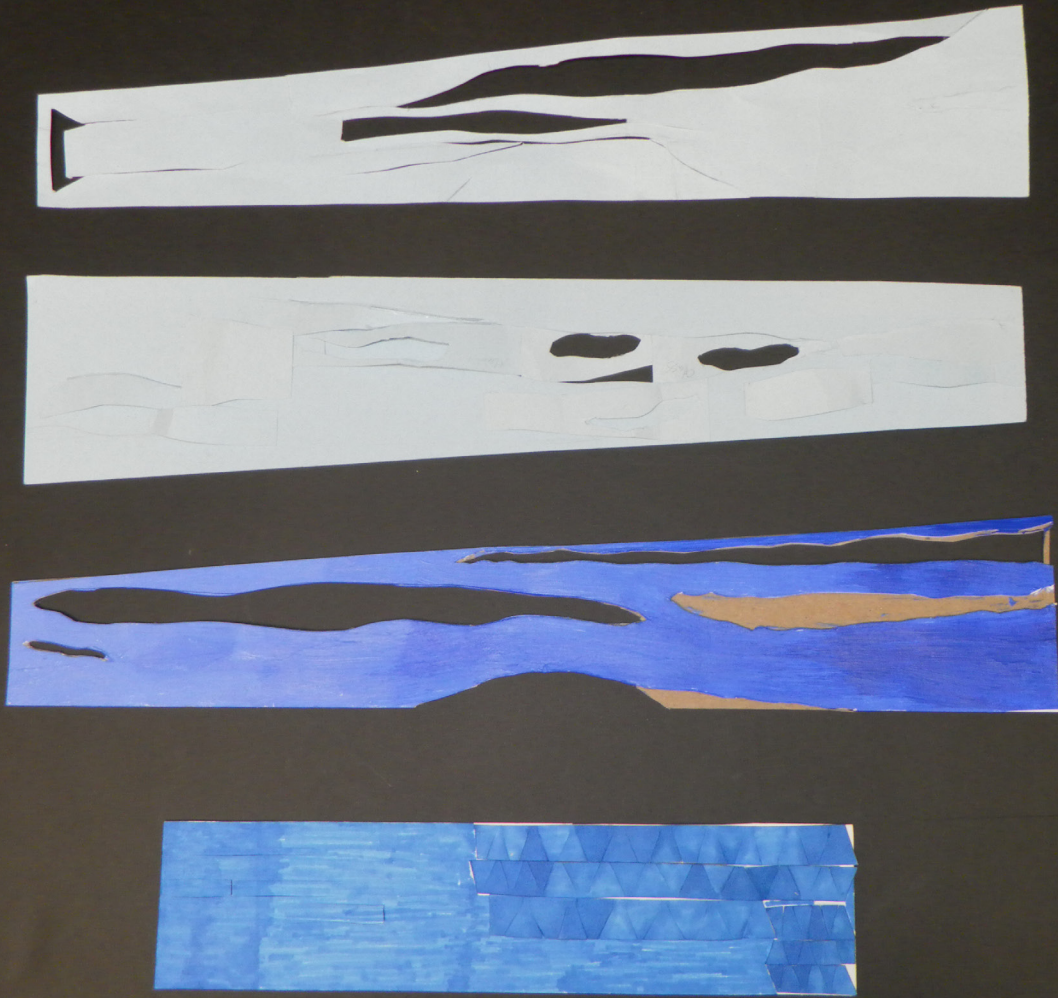
ARAWAK CAY
(North of Site)

Near BLUE
LAGOON ISLAND

At BLUE
LAGOON ISLAND

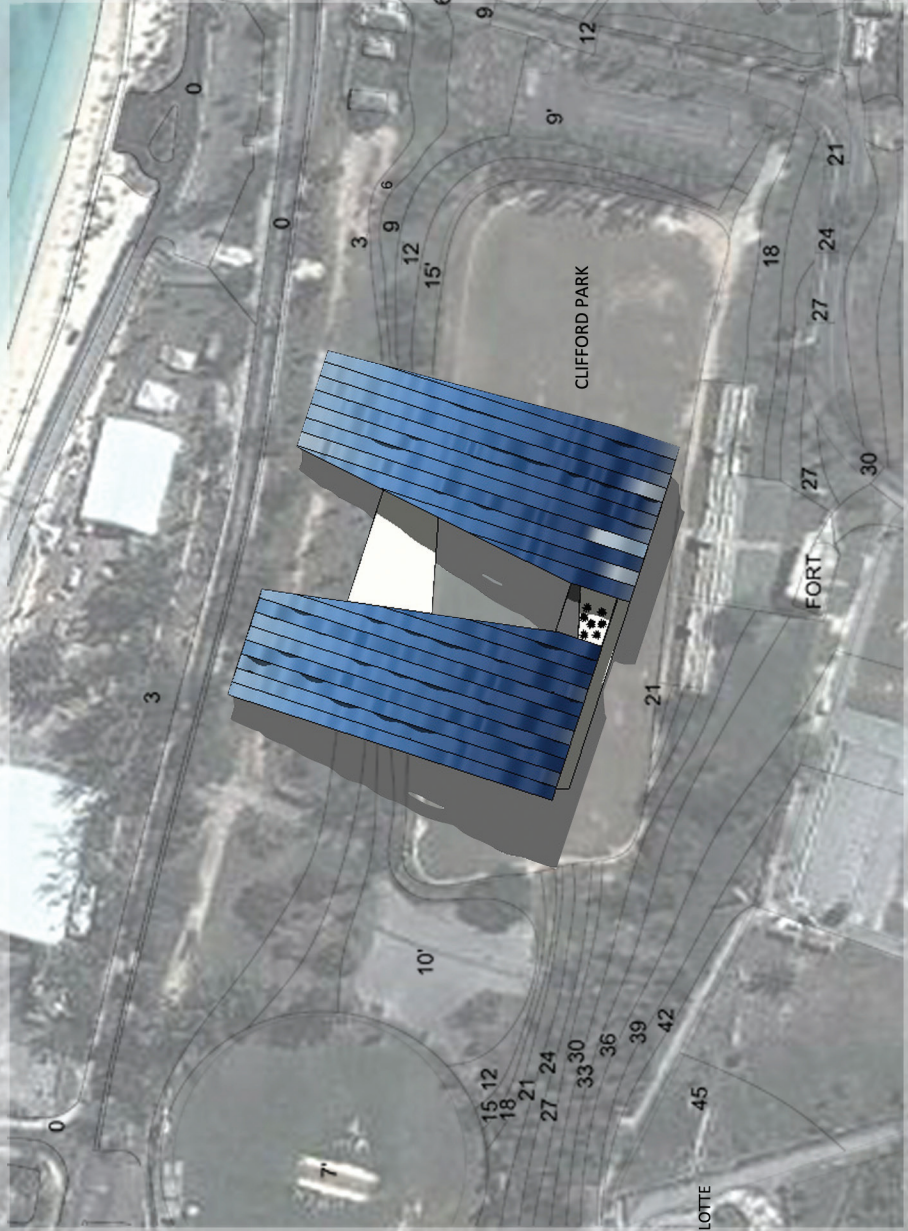


FACADE STUDY MODELS





ATLANTIC OCEAN



PLANS
SCALE: 1/64" = 1'-0"



GROUND LEVEL



PLANS
SCALE: 1/64" = 1'-0"

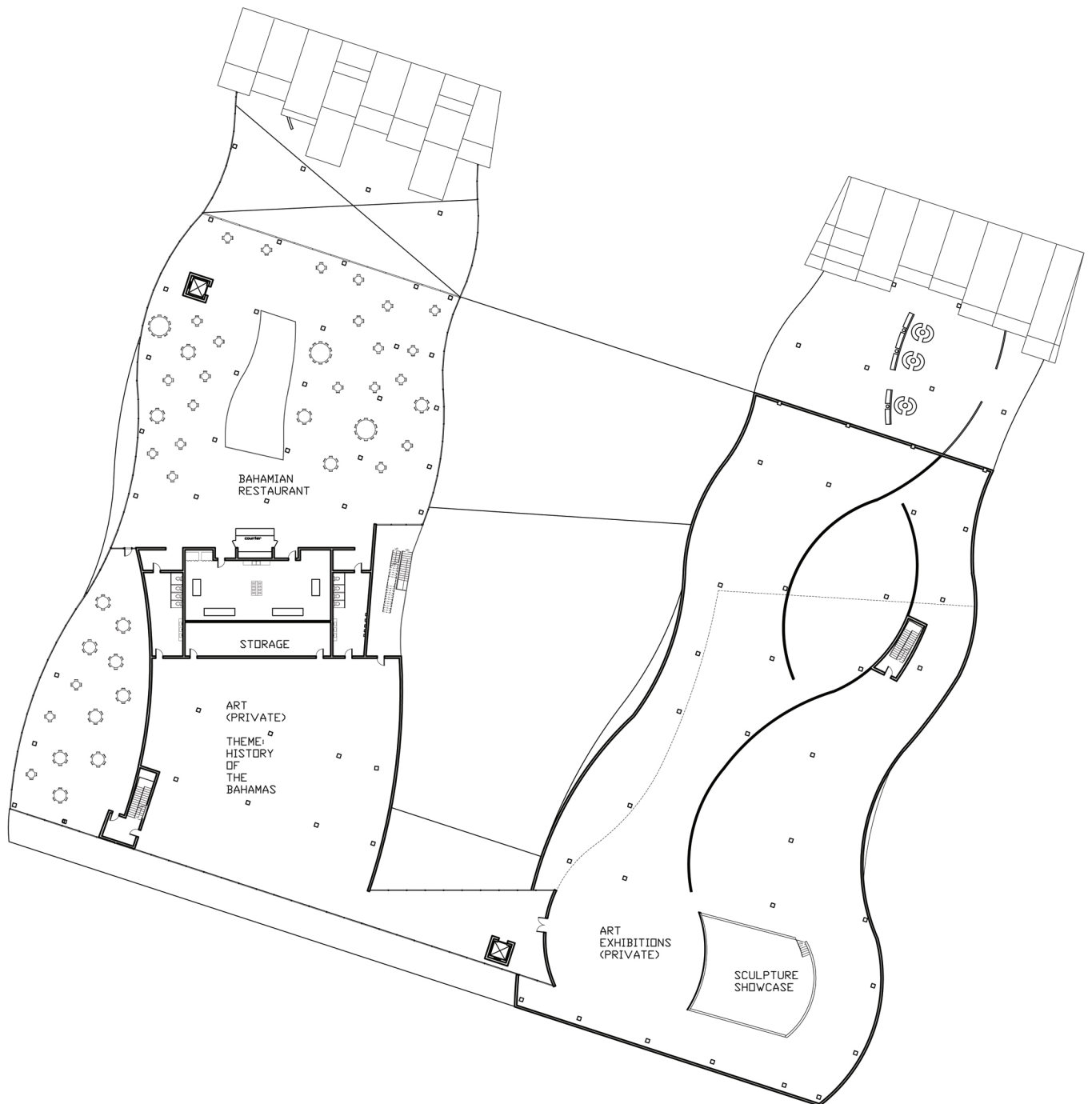


LEVEL 1



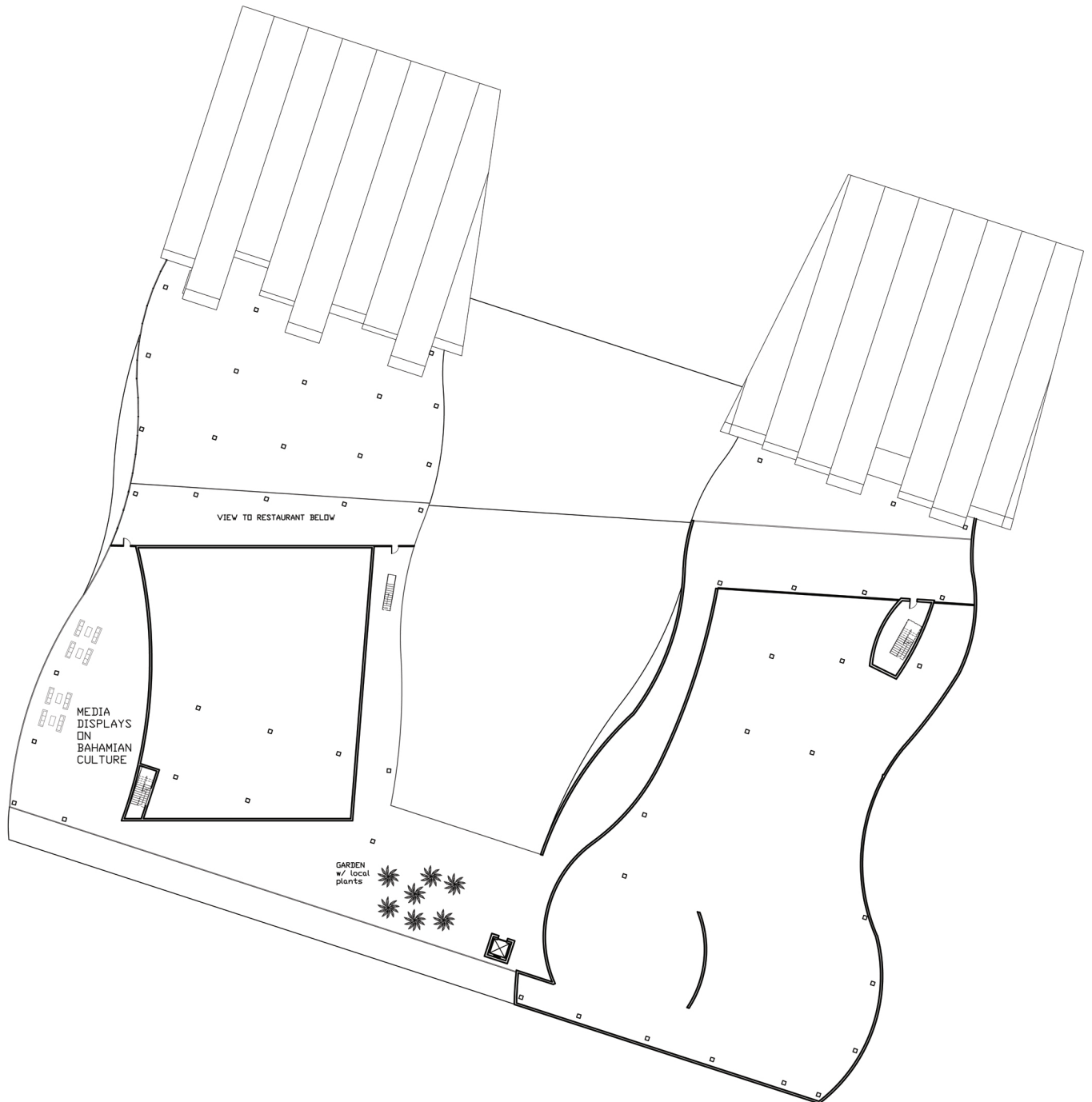
PLANS
SCALE: 1/64" = 1'-0"

LEVEL 2



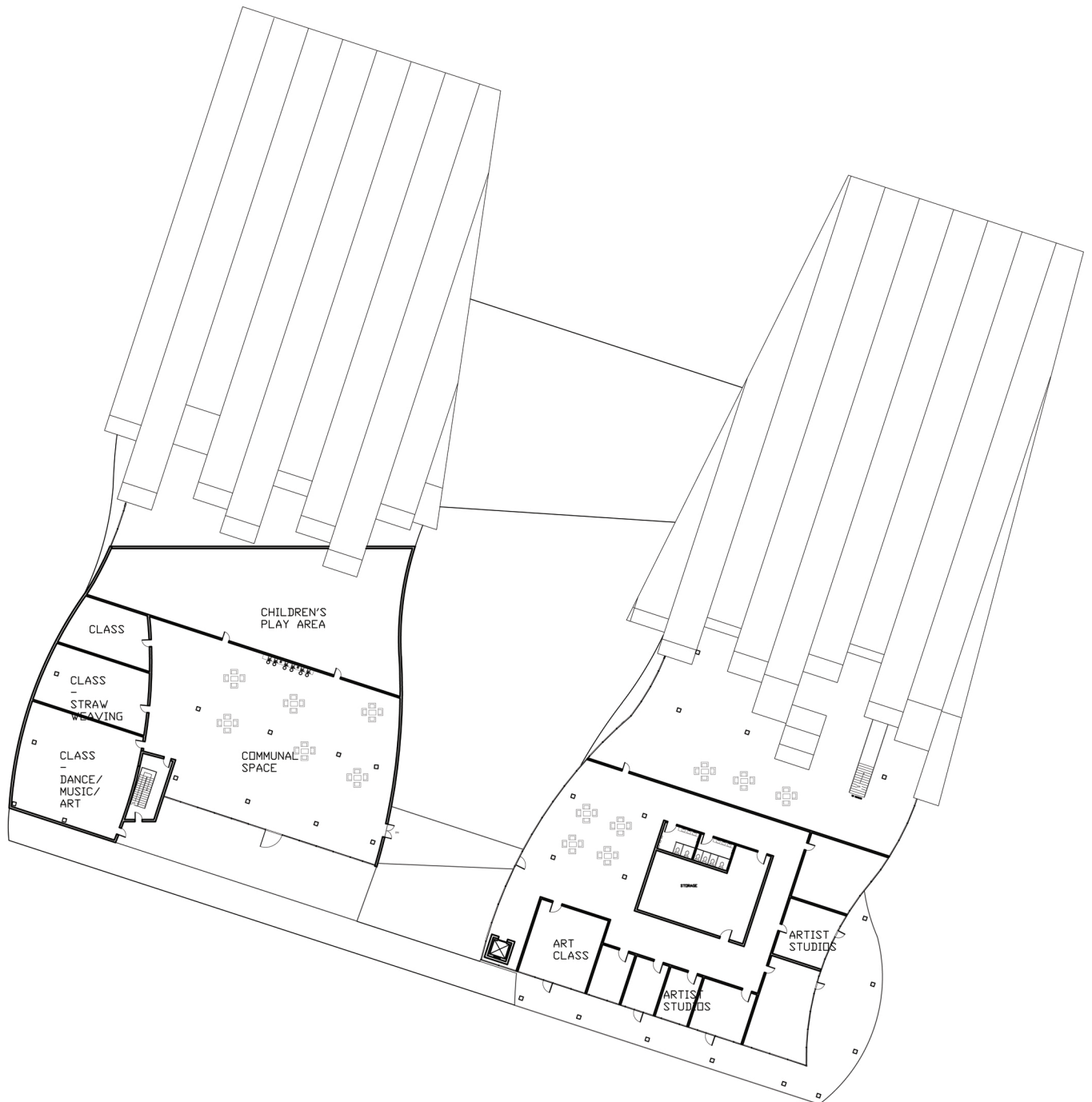
PLANS
SCALE: 1/64" = 1'-0"

LEVEL 3



PLANS
SCALE: 1/64" = 1'-0"

LEVEL 4

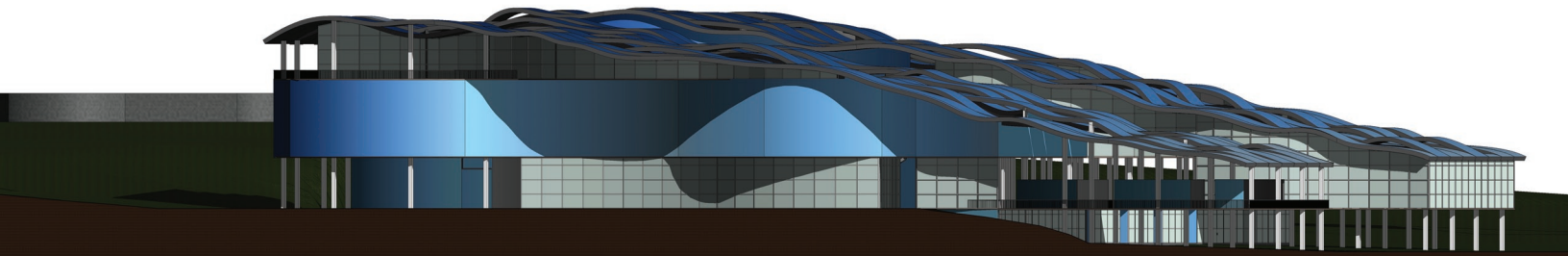




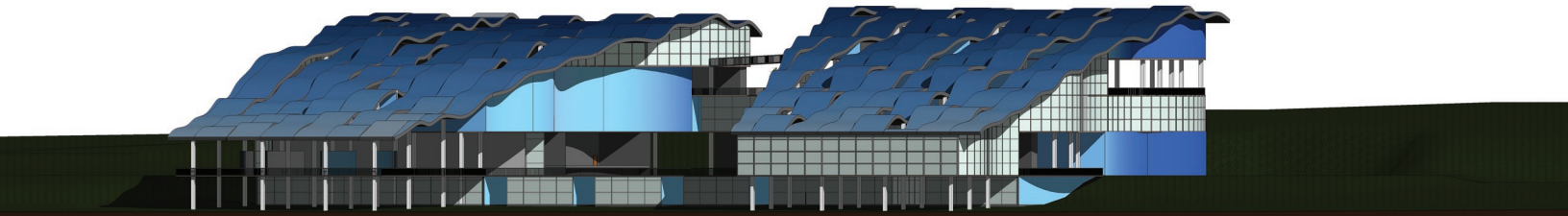
LEVEL 1 PLAN w/ CIRCULATION DIAGRAM
SCALE: 1/128" = 1'-0"

ELEVATIONS

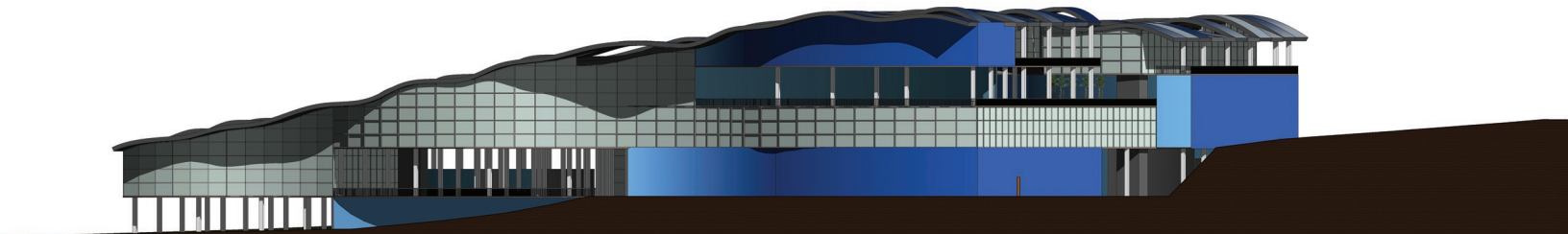
SCALE: 1/64" = 1'-0"



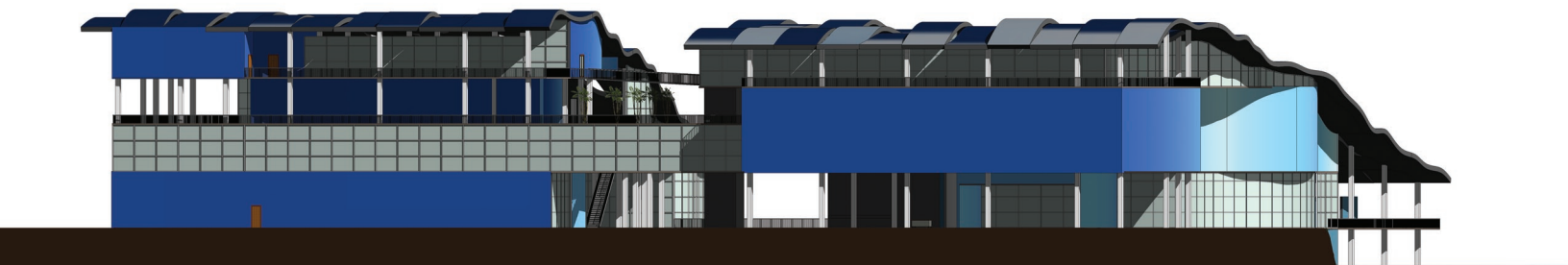
EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



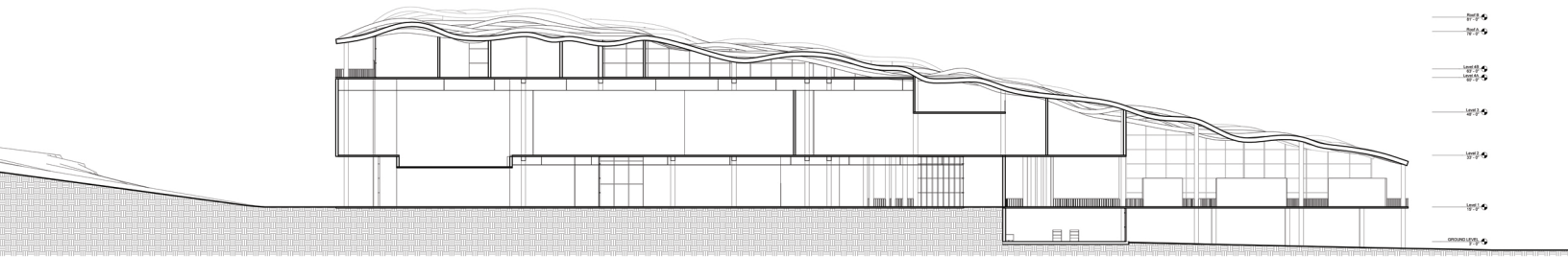
WEST ELEVATION



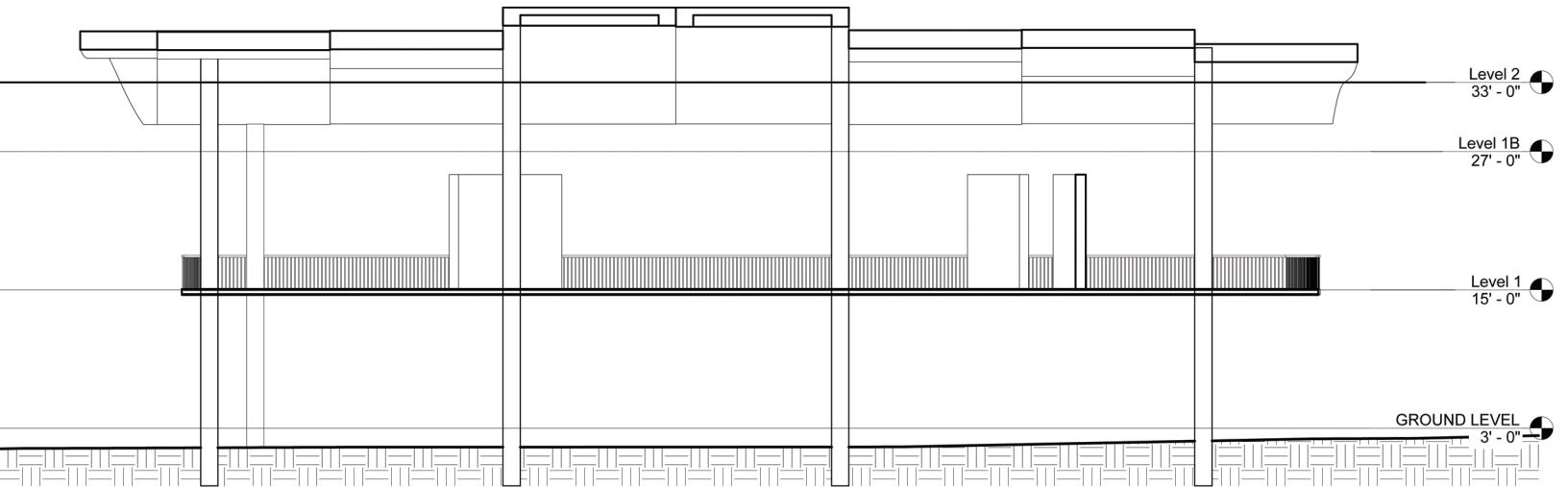
SOUTH ELEVATION

SECTIONS

SCALE: VARIES



S1 - SECTION 1
SCALE: 1/64" = 1'-0"



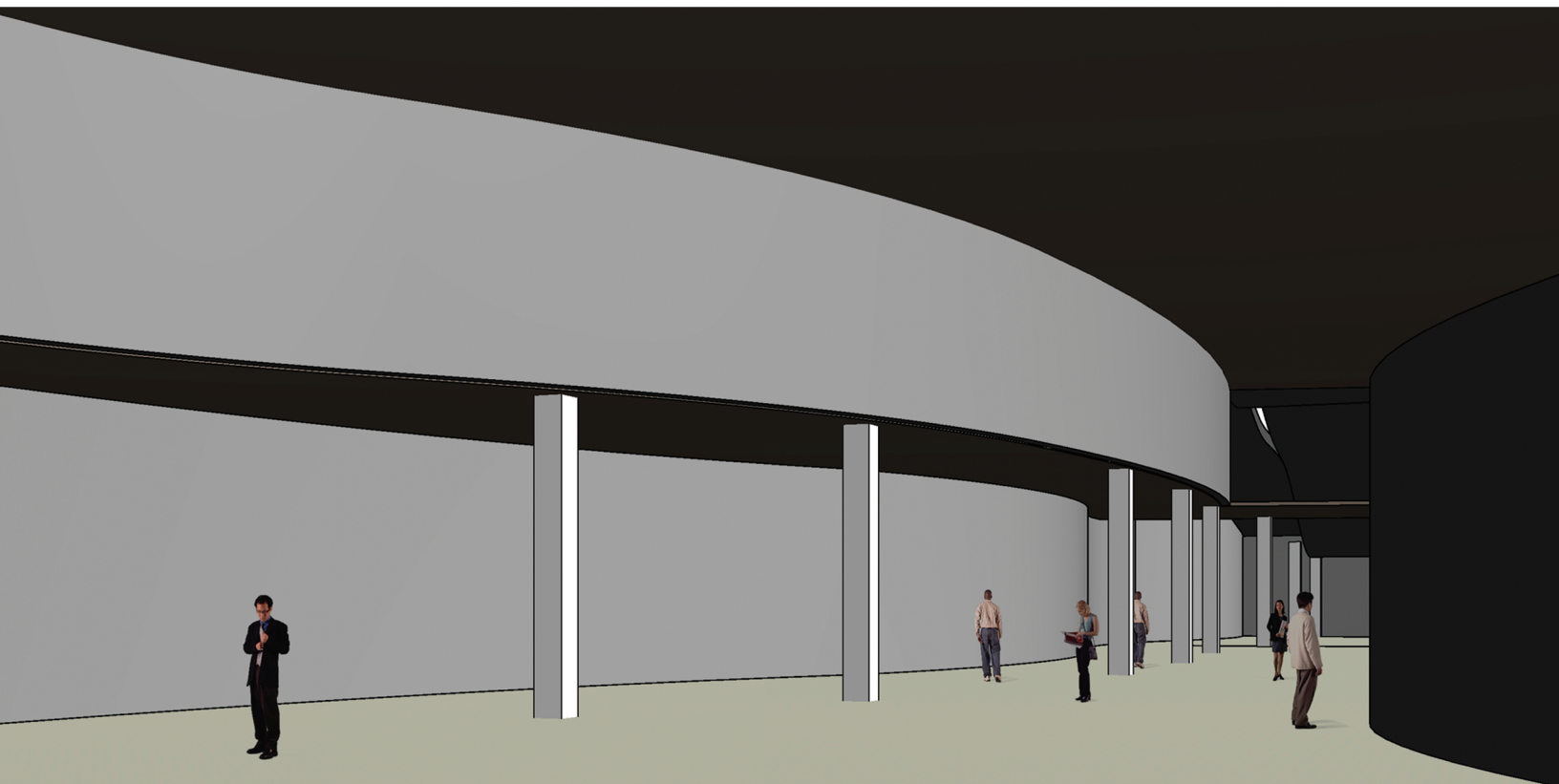
S2 - WEST WING SECTION
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



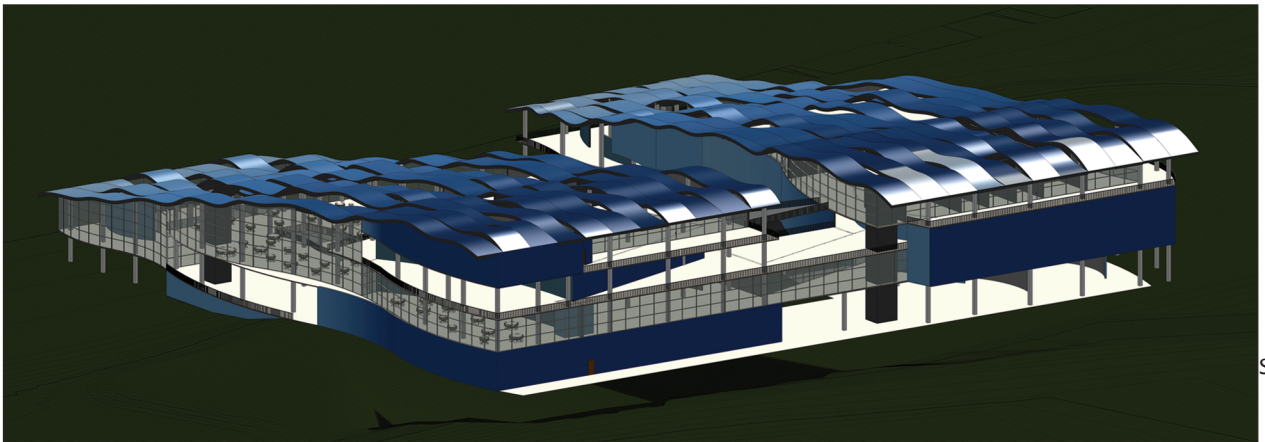
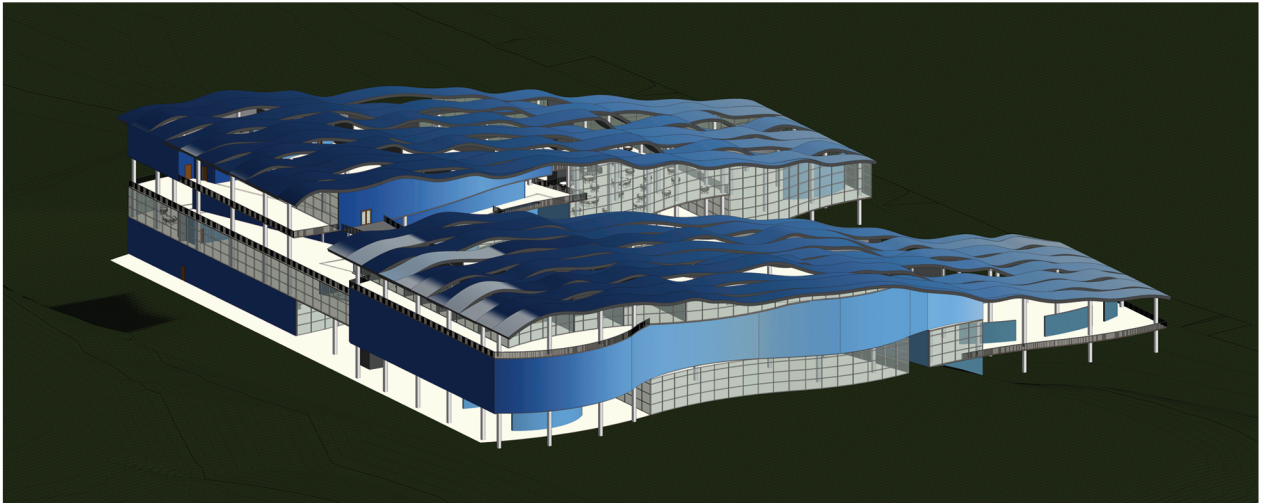
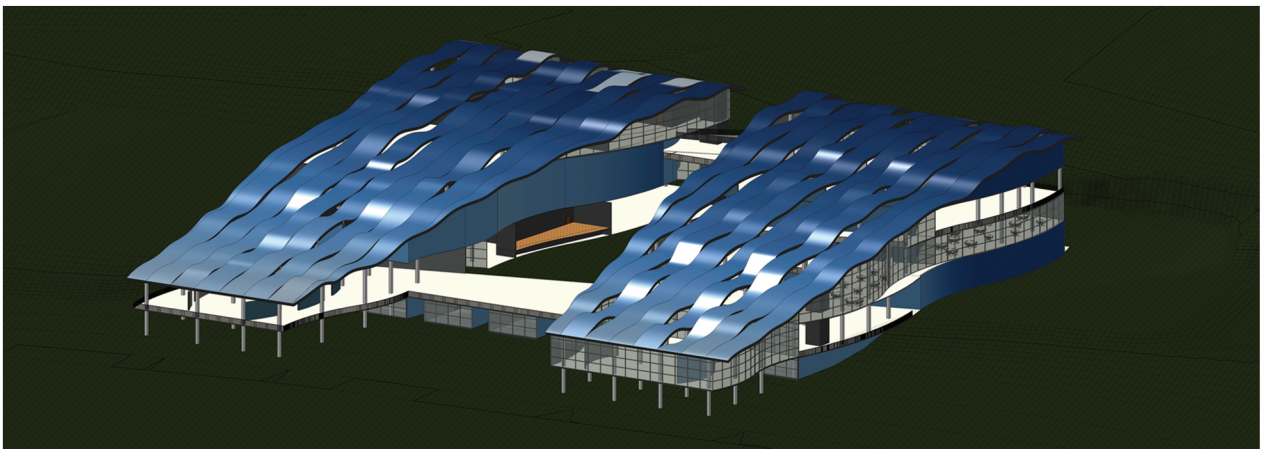
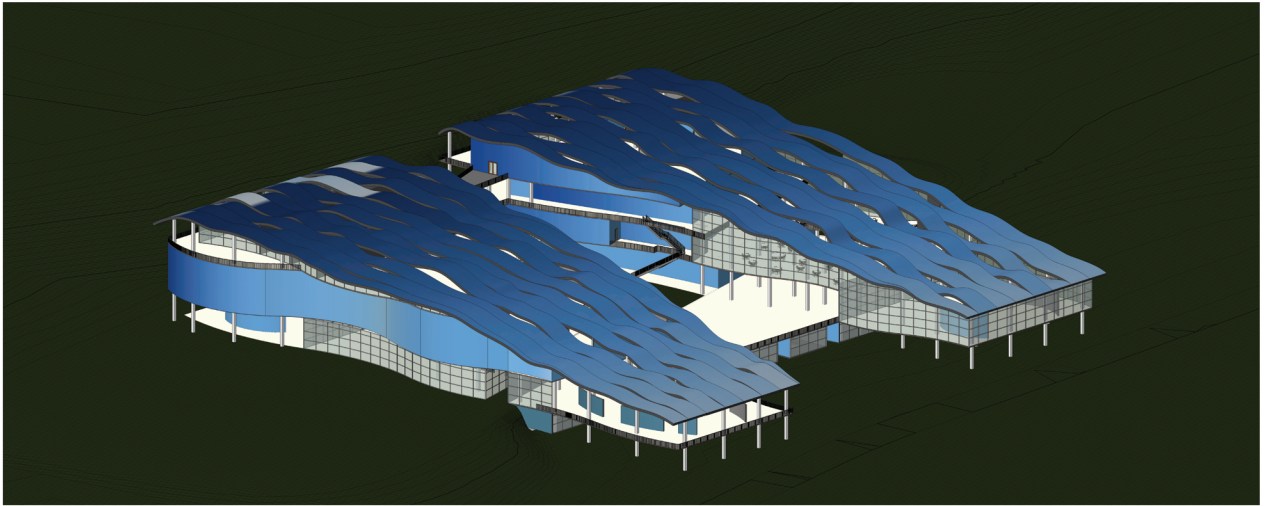
Cafe

INTERIOR PERSPECTIVES

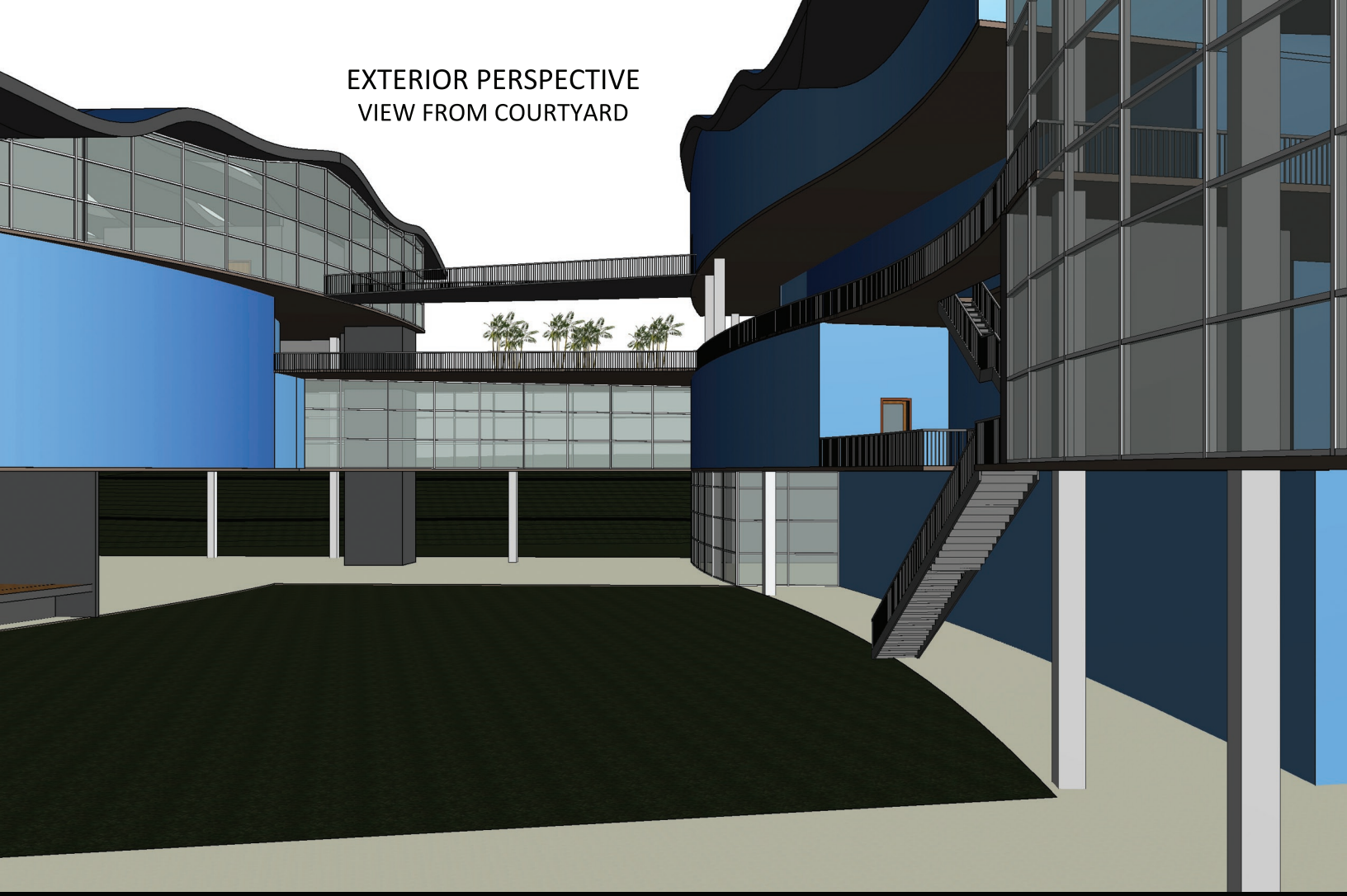
Main Art Gallery (Private)



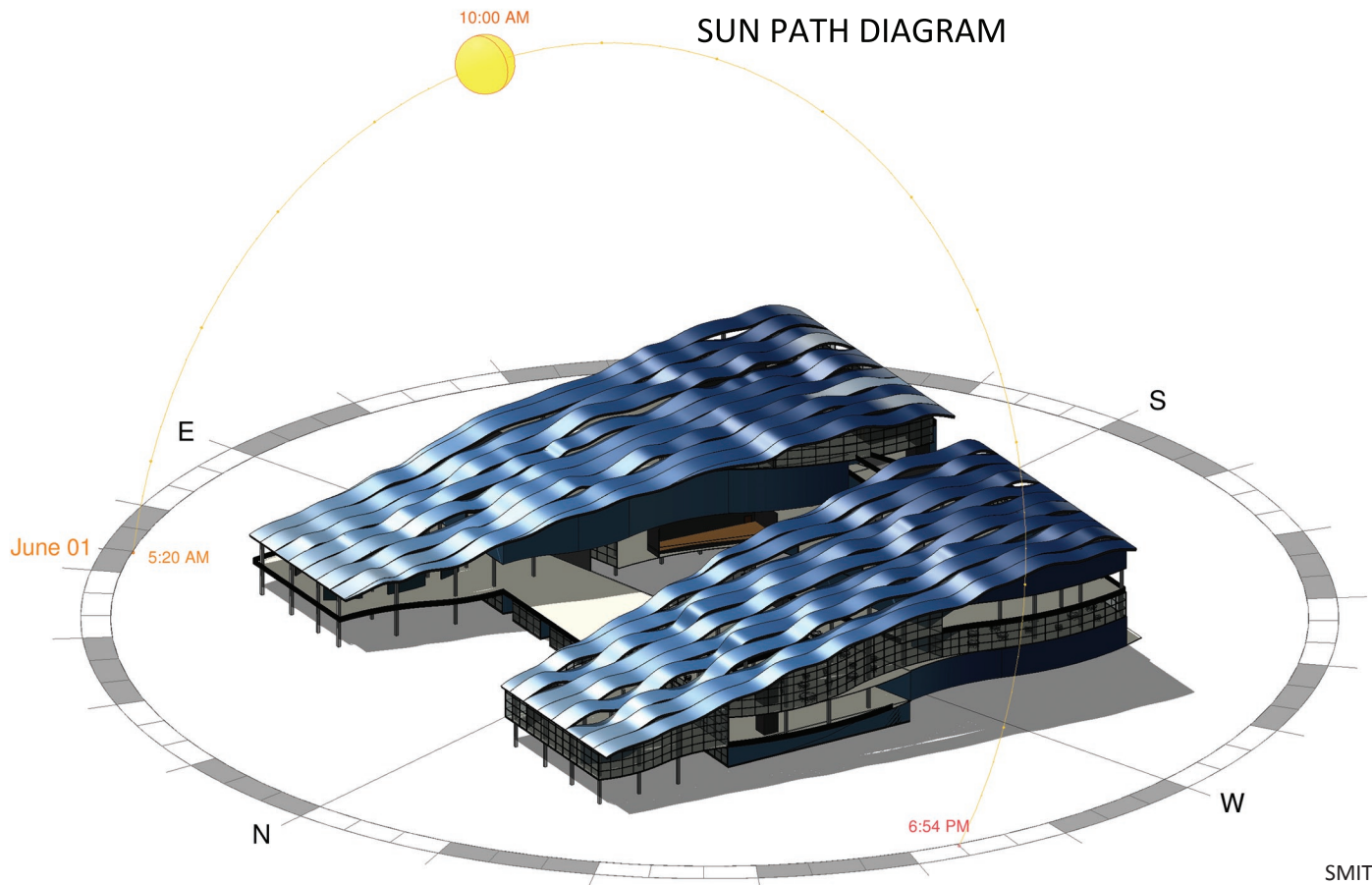
BUILDING PERSPECTIVES



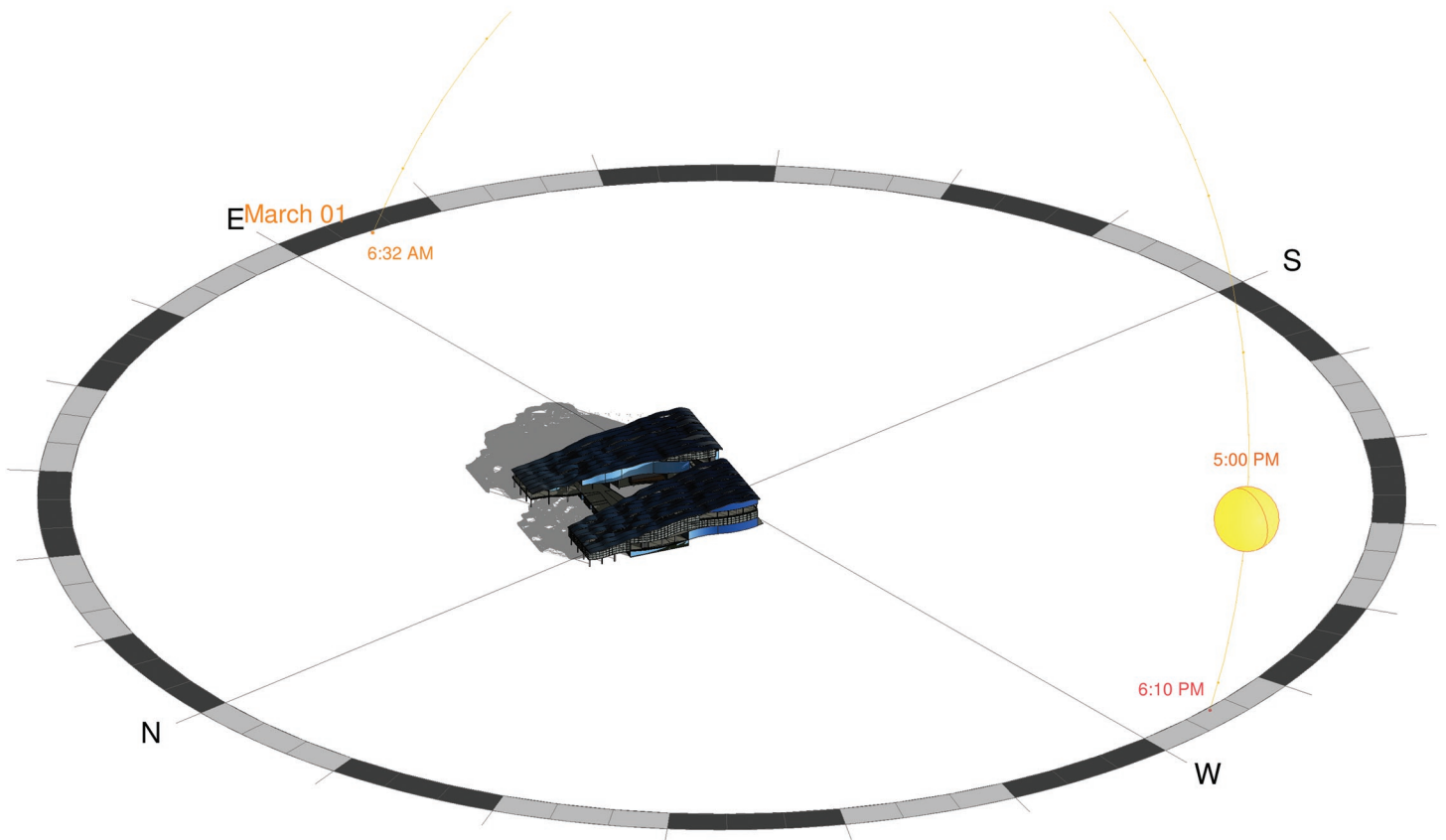
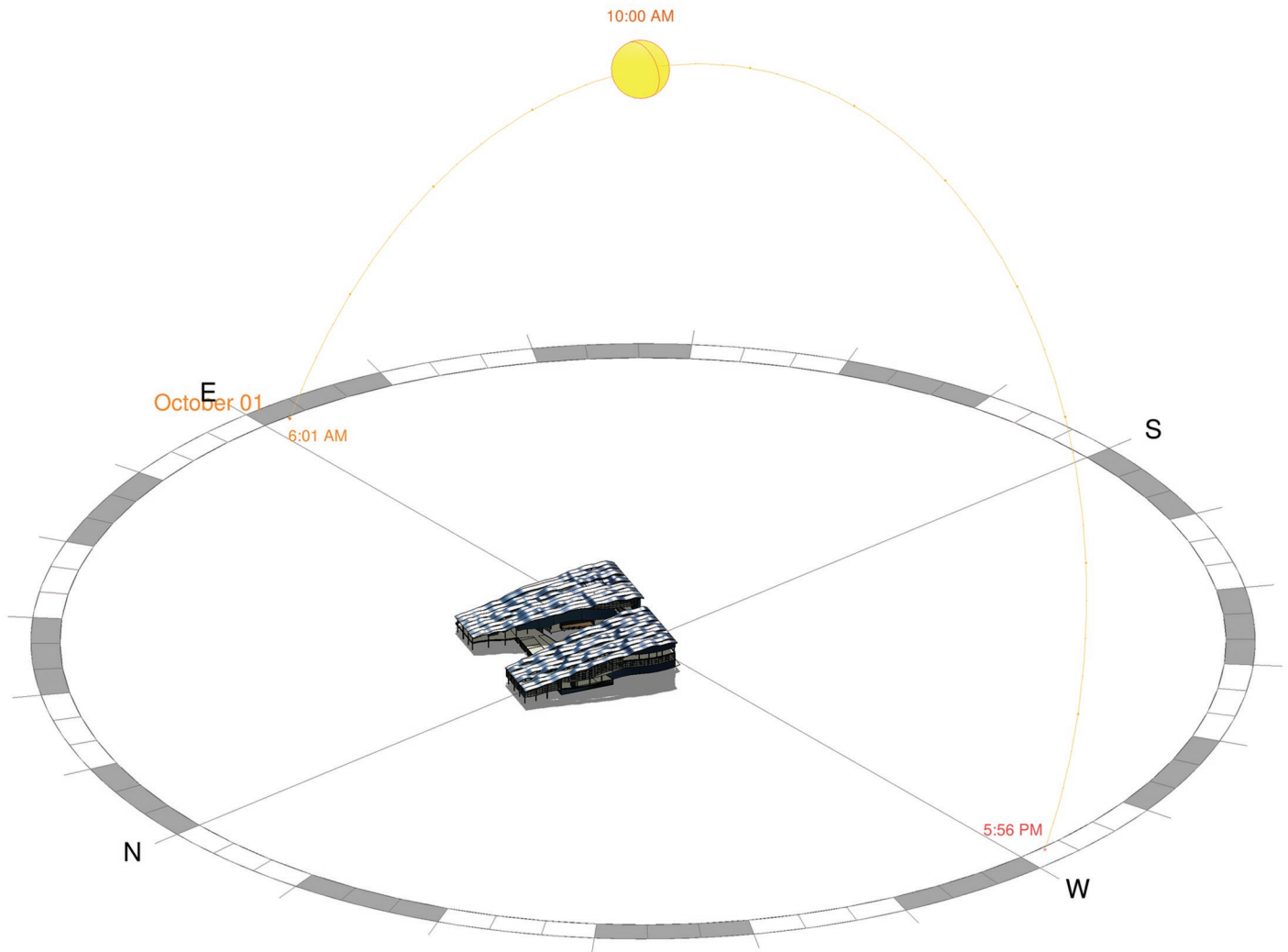
EXTERIOR PERSPECTIVE
VIEW FROM COURTYARD



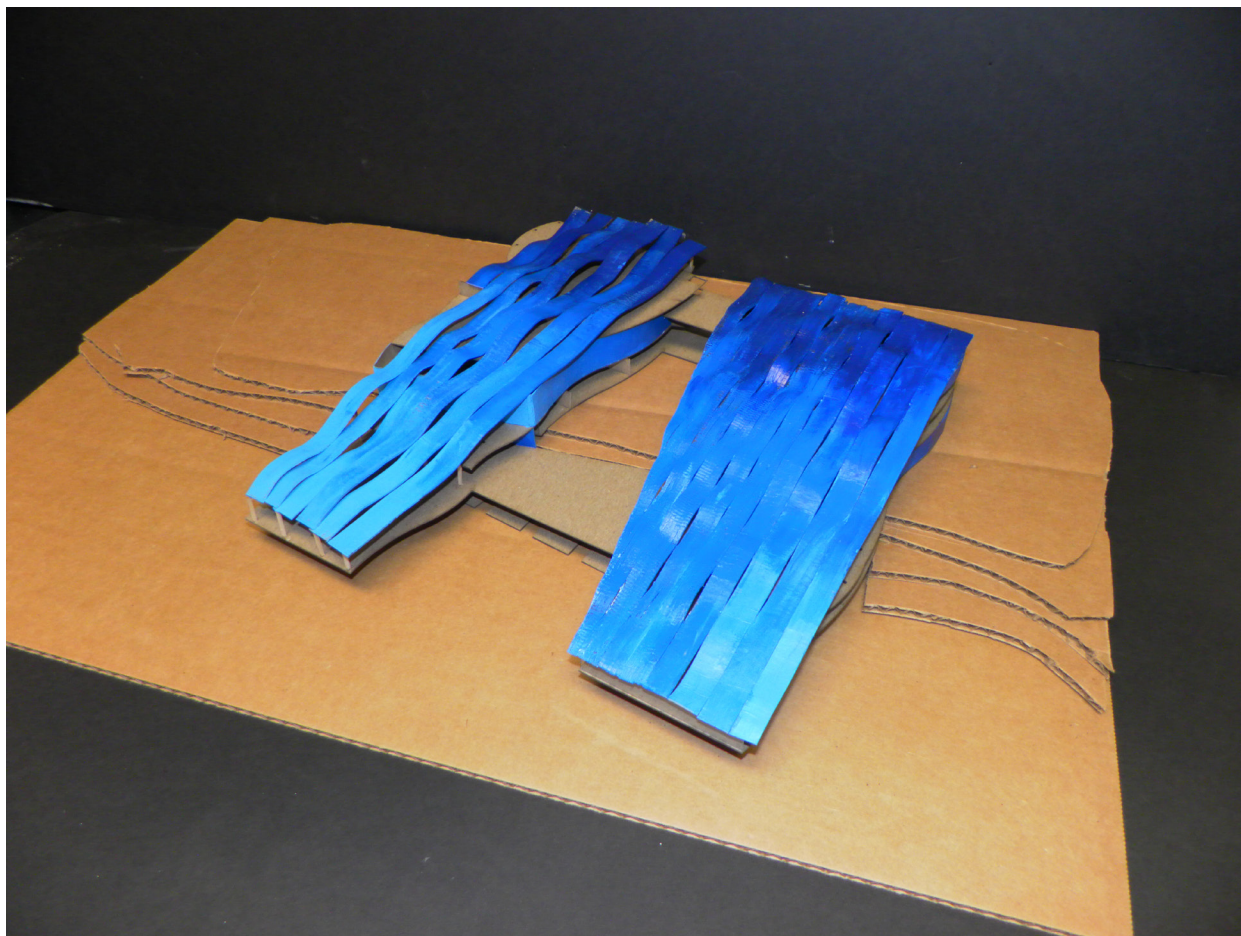
SUN PATH DIAGRAM



SUN PATH DIAGRAMS

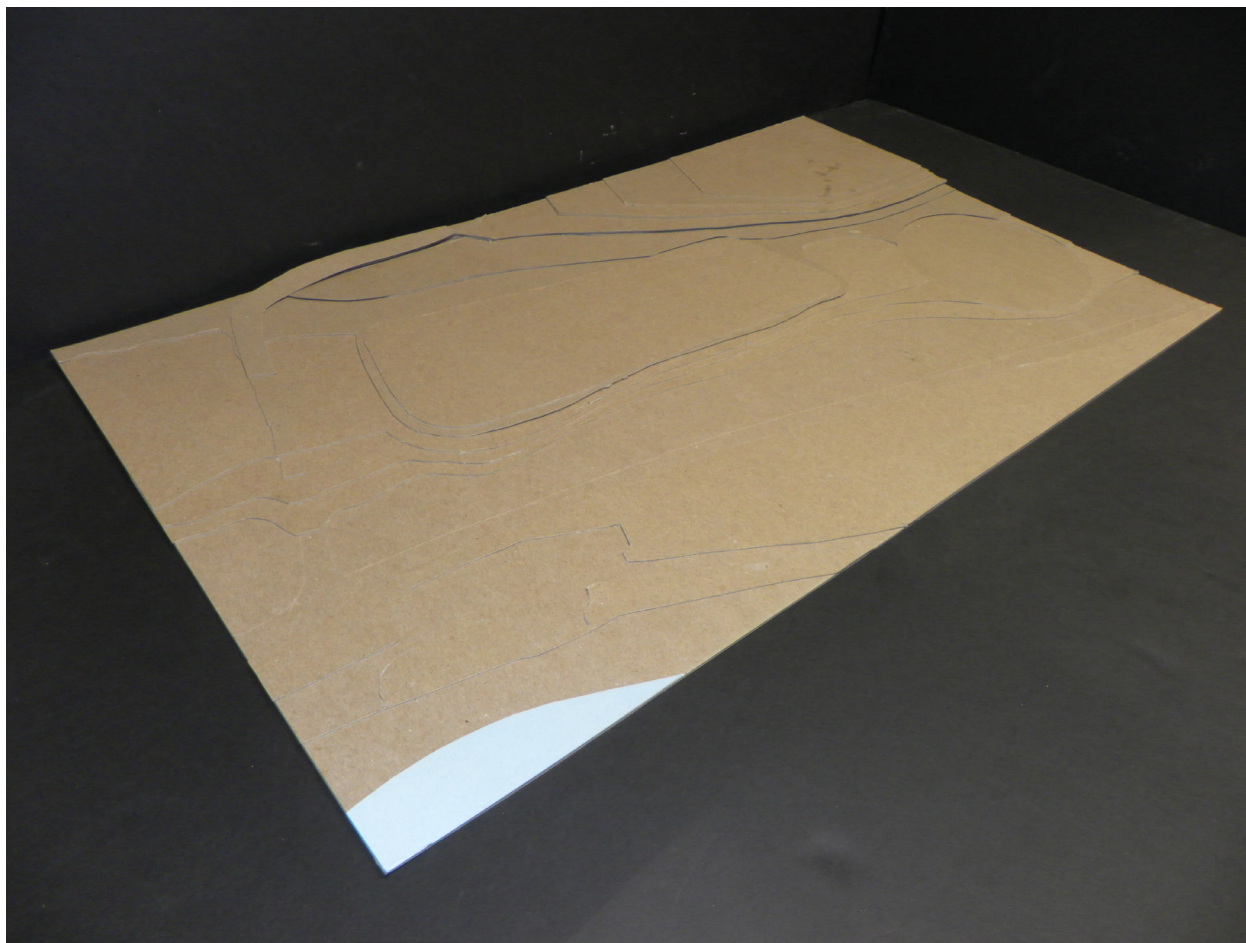


BUILDING MODEL



East wing “peeled away” to reveal interior spaces.

TOPOGRAPHY MODEL



THESIS REFLECTION

Although I tried to keep in mind the various principles and concepts of critical regionalism throughout this project, there were times that I had to remind myself of the core intent of my design. One of the main issues that I would address if given more time would be to create stronger connections from my building to the site and surrounding areas. For example 1) a pedestrian bridge or architectural connection from the Cultural Center to Arawak Cay and/ or 2) a southern bridge or trail leading to Fort Charlotte.

Overall I feel that I accomplished the main goal of my thesis, which was to create contemporary architecture that responds to characteristics of its location. Although my building respects place, it also allows people to question what exists due to its contrasting qualities. For example, its appearance, its much needed program, and the way it addresses and seeks to positively affect issues of tourism and community within The Bahamas.